

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

School Committee Meeting

May 13, 2008

Open Session

Mrs. Morris, Chair, called the meeting to Order at 6:00PM. Members present: Anthony Carcieri, Stephen DeCastro, Robert Faria, Steven Santos, Mildred Morris. Also present: Mr. Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent and Mr. Robert Silva, Esq.

Motion by Mr. Faria to move to executive session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel, (a) (2) Collective Bargaining/Litigation, seconded by Mr.Carcieri. Vote 5-0.

Open Session reconvened at 7:30PM. Motion to seal the minutes of the executive session by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

Mrs. Morris reported that the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jacqueline Forbes, has accepted a position pending approval of contract. Dr. Forbes was not in attendance at the meeting due to a family illness out of state. Discussion will take place upon her return

regarding a timetable to appoint a new Superintendent. Mrs. Morris wished Dr. Forbes and her family well.

Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence was observed.

Record of Previous Meetings – Motion to accept the minutes of the April 7, 2008 and April 29, 2008 meeting by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. DeCastro. Vote 5-0.

Chair's Report - Mrs. Morris reported that she attended a meeting on May 9, 2008, along with the Superintendent and City officials, at the office of the Auditor General who has asked for more information regarding the fiscal year. Mr. McDonald, City Finance Director has provided that information.

Student Liaison – Nate Lovett presented a report on high school activities/events.

Student Recognition – Various students were recognized for accomplishments: National Math Exam contest winners, art, culinary, construction, and participants in the all state music festival. Also, lab classroom teachers and Physics First Program teachers.

Hearings - None

Reading of Communications – Mr. Faria reported on the Kent Heights

Fair to be held this weekend. Mr. Santos reported out regarding a copy of a letter he received, addressed to Dr. Caswell, Principal of the High School regarding a teacher, Mrs. Almquist helping students.

Educational Program Report

Showcase of school websites – priority this year and updated in-house regularly; contact information, testing; encourage all parents to view sites – online viewing of websites. Survey to principals regarding tech advisors to evaluate the process. DeCastro asked if student grades were on line?

Student Progress Monitoring Proposal – need school max – update student data base system – school max not an option – many looking for new student info system. Parents would like to see test information; important resource for the community.

Mr. DeCastro asked about voice over IP? Savings on telephone costs - any progress – funds allocated for city to move ahead – look at putting into schools. Lori Fox said voice over IP is E-ratable with free/reduced lunch; could fall under E-rate except for physical phone system

Mr. DeCastro asked to bring up with City manager if given a chance – capital expense?

Lori Fox – city would see a return on investment in two years

Mr. DeCastro – suggestion that we do whatever we can even if we lease four to five years; could reduce our month to month expenses –

cost benefit analysis should be done

Report of Superintendent and Staff

FY 2007-08 Financial Report – The April report indicated a \$324,2243 estimated deficit. Mr. DeCastro said there are two areas where we have issues: health insurance and tuitions are projected to overspend; does this include savings from the health insurance change? Mr. Capron answered that the health insurance estimated total expenditure does include the estimated savings. Mr. Santos said that last year the deficit was \$400,000; Bacon & Co. will be available at the June meeting; Mr. Faria asked to put the audit on line before the June meeting. Mr. Daft to look into this.

Personnel Recommendations

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Elizabeth Salzillo Grade 2, Waddington Elementary School

One year – 2008/2009 School Year

Lawrence Izzi Social Studies Teacher – EPHS

One Year – 2008/2009 School Year

Motion: Faria/Second: Santos. Vote 5-0.

Request for Home Schooling – Two requests were submitted for approval; late due to issue of residency. Mrs. Morris asked if there was a cut off date. Motion by Mr. Santos to approve, seconded by Mr.Faria. Vote 5-0.

Report of Sub-Committees - Finance Sub Committee – Mr. Faria reported that a new Budget format is in place for 2009 and meeting dates will be released soon. He invited everyone to attend a state house hearing regarding the Savage funding formula on Thursday in RM 35; they are looking for support and testimony. A meeting has been scheduled for May 28th regarding ground work for negotiations.

Unfinished Business

Nepotism Policy - Mr. Santos said he brought this policy up in January and it was referred to legal. Most companies have policies on the books; we have nothing; he wanted to bring this up for discussion again and read the policy into the record. Mr. Santos thinks the policy is well defined. We have heard from the ACLU; he feels we sorely need this; it is not restrictive, but offers guidelines and he moved for first passage. Motion by Santos, seconded by Mr. Faria for discussion. Mr. Faria talked about the issue of friendship; similar policies in Narragansett and Providence and he would second for first passage. Mr. DeCastro said he wants no part of it; people should not be penalized for relationships; for the record he has no

relatives in the system. He felt it was too restrictive; he can understand and appreciate limiting relatives in supervisory roles, but sees no reason for it since the conflict of interest laws are strict enough and there will be a legal battle with the ACLU. Mr. Carcieri had no comment when asked by the Chair. Mrs. Morris said she would not vote for this policy; no one should be penalized and this is an insult to young people, graduates who have done well. She cannot vote for this at all; the ethics commission is already strong on this. Mr. Santos said it is not restrictive; it is open and offers transparency; he has no relatives either in the system and feels the policy is clear and concise. The Ethics Commission changes mind too; example in Cumberland; we never know where the Ethics Commission decisions will fall. Mrs. Morris said the public hearing is an embarrassment; if we have good candidates, we should hire them.

Roll Call Vote: Mr. Carcieri, aye; Mr. DeCastro, nay; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, nay.

First passage vote 3-2.

School Committee Benefits - Mr. Faria made a motion to eliminate School Committee benefits for the next School Committee, seconded by Mr. Santos for discussion; benefits include dental and life insurance. Mr. Faria explained that School Committee members would only receive a stipend

Mr. DeCastro said to get rid of that too, then no one will run; he can support School Committee with a 20% copay; because that's what we want the unions to do and School Committee should live with the

same plan. Roll call vote: Mr. Carcieri, aye; Mr. DeCastro, nay; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, nay. First Passage vote – passes 3-2.

New Business

Amended Policy – I.E. School Committee By-Laws – First Passage – Mr. Faria complimented Mr. Carcieri for coming on board with an immediate impact. Motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Santos to approve. Roll call vote: Mr. Carcieri, aye; Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Unanimous first passage.

Amended Policy – VA.13 Child Abuse and Neglect – First Passage – Motion by Mr. Santos, seconded by Mr. Faria. Question from Mrs. Morris if the policy is in line with Restraint/Bullying Policy. Roll call vote: Mr. Carcieri, aye; Mr. DeCastro, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye. Unanimous First Passage

Legal Counsel Review - Mr. Faria felt the School Committee needed to take a look at legal expenses to try to save money. Mr. Santos also felt there was a need to do a thorough review of all expenditures including legal counsel. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to create a subcommittee to move forward for review of legal services, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote: Mr. Carcieri, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. DeCastro, nay; Mrs. Morris, nay.

Motion Passes 3-2.

June School Committee Meeting Date - Mrs. Morris reported that the June meeting has been changed to June 9th at 7:30PM due to a scheduling conflict. A motion was made by Mr. DeCastro, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

Payment of Bills

Local Operating Bill List:

Warrant #000820 5/7/08 \$ 532,438.90

Motion: Faria/Second: Santos

Warrant #000821 5/7/08 \$ 479,779.59

Motion: Faria/Second: DeCastro

Warrant #000822 5/7/08 \$ 521,237.54

Motion: Carcieri/Second: DeCastro

Warrant #000823 5/7/08 \$1,749,308.81

Motion: Carcieri/Second: Faria

Federal Bill List:

Warrant #000819 5/7/08 \$ 297,924.61

Motion: Faria/Second: Santos

Mrs. Morris asked about a facilities update; she read a letter regarding Martin Middle School. Mr. Faria talked about a device to eradicate mold from buildings and will give Mr. Tavares the number of his constituent for contact.

Mrs. Morris provided information regarding the EP Ed Foundation Duck Race on May 31st at Hunts Mills at 1:00PM; she hoped to see great participation.

Mr. Santos commented about a building and grounds report; on a tour of Waddington, the back ramp issue has been taken care of and a great job was completed; he wanted to thank Mr. Tavares and his workers.

Question and Answer Period – None

The meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Santos, Clerk of the Committee

***Notes Provided by Mr. Daft**